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Identical letters dated 2 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

As I write this letter, some 27 people are travelling on two boats in the direction of the Gaza Strip, with the stated intention of violating Israel's naval blockade of the area. Reports indicate that these boats set sail from a port in Turkey and will arrive in the vicinity of the Gaza Strip by Thursday evening or Friday morning.

This attempt to challenge Israel's naval blockade of Gaza holds the potential for dangerous consequences. Launched under the false pretext of providing humanitarian assistance, it is a provocation clearly designed only to serve an extremist political agenda.

As the United Nations Palmer report stated clearly, "The naval blockade was imposed as a legitimate security measure in order to prevent weapons from entering Gaza by sea and its implementation complied with the requirements of international law".

Over the past week — as Grad rockets and long-range missiles have fallen on Israeli cities, schools and civilians — the clear need for this blockade has been demonstrated once again. My Government has a fundamental duty to protect its citizens — and prevent weapons from reaching the hands of terrorists in Gaza. Therefore, Israel is entitled to and will take all necessary measures to prevent violations of its naval blockade.

There is no need for this flotilla. As is widely known, there are established mechanisms by which humanitarian assistance can be delivered to the Gaza Strip, including through Israel. The only goods that Israel prevents from entering Gaza are arms, weapons and material with dual-use applications — in other words, material that is used to produce bombs or other weapons.

Many international leaders — including heads of State, United Nations representatives and a majority of Security Council members — have spoken out clearly against these kinds of flotillas to Gaza over the past year, emphasizing the need for humanitarian supplies to be transferred to the area only through established channels.

In a statement on 27 May 2011, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed his belief that "assistance and goods destined to Gaza should be channelled through

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legitimate crossings and established channels", making clear that these flotillas "carry the potential to escalate into violent conflict".

As these boats continue on their course towards Gaza, the need for your unequivocal condemnation of this provocation is as clear as ever.

As the Palmer report makes clear, "States have a duty to take active steps to warn their citizens of the risks involved in running a blockade ...".

These kinds of actions are particularly troubling in the light of the present turmoil in the Middle East. The international community must send an unambiguous message to the organizers and participants of these provocations that such initiatives only serve to raise tensions in our region, stressing that the appropriate means for transferring humanitarian goods to Gaza is through established channels. Let me stress that Israel is not interested in confrontation, but is firmly determined to enforce the naval blockade of the Gaza Strip.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ron **Prosor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative